

Filed for intro on 05/18/2000

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 755
By Bone

A RESOLUTION to celebrate the history of Watertown,
Tennessee as it relates to rail transportation,
from the economic beginnings of the community
to the projected June 1 - 4, 2000 visit of Artrain
USA.

WHEREAS, this nation's system of rail transportation is part and parcel of the economic and industrial infrastructure that put the United States of America on the road to becoming the world's greatest economic power; during the 19th century, a network of rail began to knit together thousands of small rural communities, creating centers of trade and commerce that were connected to the whole country and initiating the growth and future incorporation of many of our present towns and cities; and

WHEREAS, in 1873, the community of Watertown consisted of a water-powered gristmill, sawmill and blacksmith shop, all owned by Mr. Wilson L. Waters, and seven residences; and

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WHEREAS, the Nashville-Knoxville Railroad Company was organized in 1884; Mr. Waters turned the first shovel of earth for the railroad near the train loading area in Watertown. The first train, carrying nine passengers, ran on December 12, 1889; and

WHEREAS, the availability of rail transport stimulated a period of rapid growth in Watertown; the founding of businesses such as the American Hardware Company and the print shop which published *the Watertown Witness* newspaper were accompanied by the Bell Telephone office which provided telephone service in about 1897, and a post office; and

WHEREAS, the community was ready to incorporate in 1905, now having hotels, stores for men and women's apparel, a shoe store, barber shops, cabinet shops, produce buyers, a livery, blacksmiths, a photography studio, a motion picture theater, dry cleaners, a harness maker, grocery stores, a hardware store, four drug stores, a jewelry store and a taxi service; and

WHEREAS, all those businesses depended upon, or were enhanced by, rail transportation. Lumbering for fashioning crossties and for providing building materials was important; the railroad expanded the market for those products as well as for the farm gear, harnesses, tool chests and meal and flour produced in local manufacturing operations; and

WHEREAS, other businesses that benefited from the railroad were an ice plant, two chemical companies, the Coca-Cola and Cherry Cola bottling companies, the Williams Pin Company, a shirt factory, a sock manufacturer, a brick kiln, poultry farming and the Standard Oil Company distributorship; and

WHEREAS, rail commerce in Watertown reached its peak in the decade of World War I, when there were four regular freight runs a day. In 1923, a major fire destroyed many businesses and burned down the railroad station, which was replaced in 1926 with an attractive brick station; and

WHEREAS, following the First World War and through the years immediately following the Second World War, the growth in numbers of personal automobiles doomed rail passenger

traffic, which was discontinued in 1955. During the 1960s and 70s Watertown and many other railbased communities suffered an economic decline as the interstate long haul trucking industry carried increasingly more freight; and

WHEREAS, in 1972, the Tennessee Central Railroad's Watertown Depot was torn down; for the next few years rail transportation languished, until the citizens of Watertown made an effort to bring rail transport back to their community; and

WHEREAS, in 1990, train service was inaugurated to bring people to Watertown for events such as the Mile Long Yard Sale, the May Festival, the Fall Street festival, and now annual events such as hoe-downs, yard sales, parades, a jazz festival, Valentine's Day, the Easter Egg hunt, and the Santa excursion; and

WHEREAS, for the past ten years, the Historic Watertown Depot Committee has been developing the Central Tennessee Railroad Museum at Watertown, a five-acre site consisting of a depot, a museum with a rail yard, an engine house and repair facility and a gift shop. Watertown recently received funding from Wilson County to install a railroad siding, which will permit a visit on June 1-4, 2000, of Artrain USA with its exhibition entitled *Artistry in Space, the NASA Art Program*; and

WHEREAS, this Ann Arbor, Michigan, based travelling art museum has visited 550 communities in 44 states and the District of Columbia since its foundation in 1971. More than 2.5 million people, primarily school children, have viewed the exhibits; and

WHEREAS, the *Artistry in Space* exhibit features 78 paintings, prints and other works that illustrate the relationship of art to science and technology. The exhibit is sponsored by DaimlerChrysler with additional support from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Michigan Council for Art and Cultural Affairs; and

WHEREAS, works by such artists as Paul Calle, Lamar Dodd, Wilson Hurley, Peter Max, Robert McCall, Robert Rauschenberg, Norman Rockwell, Andy Warhol and James Wyeth, as

well as many others, are included in this outstanding exhibition. Transportation is provided by the nation's railroads, including BNSF, CSX, Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern; and

WHEREAS, the commitment of the citizens of Watertown to preserving the record of their colorful past with its intimate connection to rail transport, the resultant revitalization of their community, and the June 2000 visit of Artrain USA with its unprecedented opportunity for the people of the area, especially school children, to experience the interpretation of space, science and technology through the medium of art, are all worthy of the of the appreciation and commendation of this legislative body; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That this General Assembly congratulates and commends the citizens of Watertown and Wilson County on their outstanding and continuing efforts to preserve and celebrate an important part of our common history, rail transport, and at the same time to revitalize the economic and cultural lives of their community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this General Assembly expresses its appreciation to Artrain USA, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the participating corporate sponsors, and those citizens of Watertown and Wilson County whose diligent efforts secured the visit of the *Artistry in Space* exhibit to Watertown.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.